

Nimuendajú: The Tukuna

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614 Of the trees, five are identified with animals. Probably the clan kš'turš
 616 (maracajá grande; *Felis pardalis*) is also to be identified with some tree, perhaps
 824 with the pu'kirš, but of this I am not certain. The identification of trees with
 825 mammals is due to the mystic Tukuna conception of the soul (nai'-arj ma'-ñ)
 714 which certain trees possess. The tree's soul leaves it during the night in the form
 of the animal with which the tree is identified, returning at daybreak. "a'i-kja' na
 i-i' ya čiva'" ("Clan Jaguar is seringarana") or "a'i na i-i' na-a'e ya čiva'" ("Ser-
 ingarana has the soul of the painted jaguar"). In vain I tried to discover the
 reason for including the two clans having insect names with these clans that have
 tree names; no soul of a tree takes the saúva ant as its nocturnal form. Two
 informants told me independently that the relation between trees and saúva was
 that the ants were in the habit of crawling on trees.

614 All the clans of Moiety B have the names of birds.
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Clans of Moiety B¹

Clan	Related Bird	Additional Correlation
ta'u	toucan (<i>Rhamphastos</i> sp.)	
tuyay'	tujujá (<i>Tantalus loculator</i>)	
aiwru	urumutám (<i>Nothoerax urumutum</i>)	
kaurš	japihím (<i>Cassicus cela</i> , L. sp.)	
bart	japá (<i>Ostinops decumanus</i> , Pall.)	
šaj	arara vermelho (<i>Ara macao</i>)	
čara'	arara canindé (<i>Ara araranae</i>)	
voš	maracanã grande (<i>Ara maracana</i> ?)	
a'ta	maracanã; another species (<i>Ara</i> sp. ?)	
všar	parrot (<i>Amazona</i> sp.)	
šu/šp	mutum cavallo (<i>Mitua mita</i>)	Tessmann's "nóenoka"
šoru	maracanã; another species (<i>Ara</i> sp. ?)	
š/ša	urubá rei (<i>Gypagus papa</i>)	
da:vj	gavião real (<i>Thrasartus harpya</i>)	
pu'a'ka	arapaço (<i>Nasica</i> sp.)	
šta'	chicken	
š/nš	parakeet (<i>Coturus</i> sp. ?)	
dyav'ru	jaborá (<i>Myieteria americana</i>)	
šš'u'a	soçé (<i>Ardea</i> sp.) or maguany (<i>Ardea cocoi</i>)	

[824] The relations between the clan member and the tree or animal the name of
 which he bears are extremely few and do not follow any rule whatsoever.

304 It is clear that members of the macaw clans, čara' and voš', formerly used facial
 614 tattooing in designs similar to the facial feathering of these birds. I did not see.

¹ It will be noted that the author lists only 19 clans here, although he has previously referred
 to 21.—Ed.

The father may drink *paiuard* in small quantities, but only if it is sweet; 846
drinking more would make the child a drunkard and would also cause it to cry
excessively. Even after the period of restriction the father may not approach his
child if he has touched some object that might harm it. At Igarapé de São Jerônimo
I was told that the father is not subject to any dietary or other restrictions, pro-
vided that he does not touch the child.

The Tukuna, like the Apinayé, believe that the acts of the parents are reflected 846
in their children's health, and vice versa, not only in the period immediately sub- 753
sequent to birth but also throughout life. Thus, when a sick person submits to
treatment by a shaman (*pagé*) the parents as well as the children must for one
week avoid eating salt, peppers, and viscous fish.

Once the umbilical cord has fallen off, it is thrust among the roots of a *pupun-* 846
heira tree or, better yet, into a crevice opened by the edge of an ax in the bark of
the *tapereba*, since this tree "does not die," even when chopped to pieces. After
the birth of a child, the husband avoids his wife for one year, more or less.

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD

The infant is carried slung across the shoulders in a *aling*, *tipoiá* (pl. 8, b), some ten 482
centimeters wide, which is double, so that the child sits on one strip while the 854
other supports its back. This *aling* (T., na: *čimj**) was formerly woven of cotton 286
or *tucum* fiber, or even at times made of *tururí* bark cloth. Nowadays it is almost
always of purchased material.

Amulets protect the child against disease purely by their magical powers. Thus, 751
the child has the skull, minus the beak, of a *miuá* (*Phalacrocorax vigna*) suspended 854
from its neck so that it shall not fall sick of fever. A necklace of certain seeds with 778
a penetrating odor protects it against *cafarrah*; and the claw of a *taťá canastra*
(*Cheloniscus gigas*), hung from the wrist, guarantees the child's becoming an
expert worker, especially a good canoewright. The Tukuna have not the slightest
conception of the "evil eye."

If one goes at night into the dark jungle with a nursing, the infant runs the 854
risk of losing the soul from its body. To prevent this, one must whistle and call 776
the child by name. The tree spirits also like to steal children's souls, as do the 774
water demons called *dyě'vaē* (see p. 119), which threaten it during its bath in
the *igarapé*; for this reason the mother is accustomed to thrust a magic arrow into
the bath water. Children less than two years old crying alone attract the shades
of the dead (*na-čii'*), who separate their souls from their bodies. All these cir-
cumstances require the intervention of a shaman. The child receives its name on 852
the day after birth, as already described (p. 60). At the age when they begin to
crawl, children are subjected to a ceremony called *tə-ta' ččmatj* (paint them), at
which they are daubed with red *urucú* and decorated with feathers plucked from
parrots.

Children submit—formerly at the age of two, nowadays at four years or later—
to a second festive ceremony called *bua tə ta bē'ėru* (pluck the children's hair), at
which the ears are also pierced and boys have the septum of the nose pierced. [304]
Today only the hair is plucked—if, indeed, it is not cut with scissors—and the
Nimnuendajú, The Apinayé, p. 102. girls' ear lobes are pierced.

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756 lateral hole, a little below the tip. It was so described to me by Nino, who had seen
276 one used by old Romão. I myself never got to see one.

774 *Soul loss.*—We have already seen (p. 101) how the spirits of the trees may cause
776 disease, not only at the request of a sorcerer but also spontaneously. In addition,
753 there are still two categories of disease: those caused by soul loss and those caused
by epidemics of post-Columbian origin. The tree spirits kidnap the souls of the
living, but apparently only those of children, as do the aquatic demon dyé'vaé and
the ghosts of the defunct (naéii'). For this purpose they whistle and call a child
by name when the soul accompanies it by night through the jungle.

774 Nino told me how the soul of his daughter, ñua'éina, had been stolen when the
755 child was being given a bath in the igarapé. As a result, she became pallid and
weak and, had not the shaman Thomaz intervened, she would have died. At night-
fall he sang, as the child lay in her mother's arms; he blew smoke over her from
heel to head and in the opposite direction, then placed the extinct cigarette butt
below the nape of her neck and went to sleep. At midnight he awoke and inquired
about the child's condition. She was already nursing again, and her eyes were
normal. He then ordered the parents to suspend the cigarette butt from her neck
until it should fall of its own accord.

775 When a child under two years of age cries alone, the shades of the dead arrive
and carry off its soul. A shaman may force its return to the body again by the
process described above, but the danger is that the soul may have already tasted
the food of the shades. In this event, the child begins to eat earth, coal, and so
forth, and always dies sooner or later.

753 *Cure of epidemics.*—Epidemics come from the sun, where their presence is indi-
731 cated by a greenish aureole. Without the sun's desire they are carried off by the
821 wind, which spreads them among men. On the occasion of a serious epidemic of
[753] catarrh, a certain shaman called the people together, collected the invisible path-
ogenic substance from each, placed it in an urn, and rendered it harmless by
smoking.

787 *Dreams.*—During a dream, the soul (naa'é) abandons the body and has its own
774 adventures, which are real and may be of great consequence. Through dreams the
828 shaman acquires his spirit assistant, gets in touch with the tree spirit, or identifies
the sorcerer responsible for a patient's illness or death. We have seen how an injury
to the soul of a warlock in a dream excursion caused the warlock's death. Some
adventures of the soul in dreams are warnings of things to come in the near future.
If a bank subsides or a tree falls on a person in a dream, it is because others plot
against him. If he sees himself painted with genipapo, this means blood and that
he will be murdered. An encounter with a jaguar in a dream indicates the arrival
of a companion or of a member of the éiva' (jaguar) clan, whereas the visit of an
Aua'hy clan member is announced by a dream of a snake. If the snake turns aggres-
sive, however, disease is on the way.

754 *Female witchcraft.*—Contrary to what Tessmann was told, there are no female
magicians in contact with tree spirits or capable of causing death or of removing
the spells put on others. What can happen is this: a woman, in order to injure the
object of her hatred, plucks a few of her victim's hairs, which she places in an
ant nest. Or she ties them to some branches on the riverbank where their accaaw

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754 including the slayers, who had arrived that morning, horribly painted with black
682 from head to foot. The atmosphere was rather anxious, and their satisfaction at seeing me so unexpectedly was obvious, especially on Nino's part; if I had not come, they would have searched for me the following day at Igarapé de São Jeronimo, where I made my headquarters. Calmly and clearly Nino told me what had happened: "We had to do it. But now that it is done I don't want to fool with anyone else, just live in peace," he said. But naturally the case was not closed.

The civilized authorities, though aware of what had happened, made no move, but a brother of the dead man, informed by another relative, came from the outskirts of Belém with his three grown sons in pursuit of the slayers. Strangely enough, the party first came ashore at the place of another brother of Nino and Christovão who lived by himself on the banks of the Solimões, and he immediately sent to warn his kinsman. It is clear that if the sorcerer's brother had come to avenge U'iru's death immediately, he would not have pulled ashore at the house of the murderers' brother.

However, Nino, Christovão, and Hippolyto passed the night together with loaded shotguns and machetes at hand. The night was absolutely dark. About nine o'clock, when I rashly went down to the landing, accompanied by Nino's three sons, we saw slowly approaching from the river a small light, resembling the lighted cigarette of a person silently rowing inshore; it finally stopped. Frightened, the children ran to the house while I went down to the landing, where I discovered that the light was due to a large firefly that had lit on one of the canoes inshore.

[774] I turned back with the insect in my hand, when all the Indians in the house came
[293] from all sides to meet me, for they were terrified at my unheard-of audacity. The point was that the arrival of a sorcerer's soul is announced in the dark by a small firefly-like light that emanates from the tucum-nut ring the sorcerer, like most Tukuna, wears on his finger. My attitude in abstaining from all criticism or moral
[123] judgment and in accepting the tragedy as a consummated fact visibly cleared the atmosphere and calmed their spirits. When I returned to Igarapé de São Jeronimo on the following day, the situation was almost back to normal.

In fact, until my departure in September nothing untoward occurred. However, I believe that the brother of the murdered U'iru will still try to avenge him at the first opportunity.

783 *Another method of purification.*—According to what he himself told me, Calixto
775 daueru'ki, to whom also killers repair for purification, has a method slightly different from that of his colleague Geraldo. First he washes the slayer's arms from top to bottom with envira de matamatá. Then he invokes the soul of the slain, by means of a song and tobacco smoke. The dead man's soul, surrounded by the smoke, which it involuntarily swallows, finally crouches down, weak and inoffensive, before the shaman, who covers it with still more smoke and, fanning the smoke, makes the soul disappear. Afterward he paints with genipapo dye only the forearms of the killer. Even with this, however, the dead man's soul is not completely annihilated. Thus, after the death of ũu'na, a Peruvian sorcerer who had fled to Brazil, where he was killed by pursuers from his own country, his soul "shot" his brother-in-law with "arrows," a fact recognized by the shaman Airú of Ilha dos Guaribas, who succeeded in curing the sufferer.

Such are the legends. The idea of heaven as an upper world similar to the earth and with inhabitants like those of the world below is encountered in the legends of the culture-hero brothers relating to the theft of fire (see p. 130) and the origin of languages. These tell how in the old days there was free passage between the two worlds, how this was interrupted, and how thereafter an attempt was made to reestablish it. All these motives are so common in American mythology that they do not merit further comment. [171]

ta-ë' and the souls.—Quite different, however, is the concept of the most important personage of the upper world, *ta-ë'*. I do not know of any similar figure in the religion of other tribes. Nothing is known of her origin. She is apparently as ancient as the heaven in which she lives, and is immortal but definitely not omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor infallible. Overburdened with tasks, she may involuntarily cause damage to men through her mistakes. Nothing material in the world was created by her, nor does she govern anything; therefore she is neither the "Common Mother" nor the "Primary Mother" in Baldus' terminology. 772

Prayers are not directed to her, nor does she receive sacrifices. She has nothing to do directly with the culture-hero brothers, who equal her in importance, or with the spirits of the trees or the demons (*nāō'*) of the lower world. No shaman is in communication with her. Nevertheless, for the Tukuna she is a figure of great importance and respect, because of her inseparable connection with the notion of sin and subsequent punishment, in life or after death, since she is the mistress of that part of the human soul called "*naa'ë*." With the other part of the soul, called "*načii*" (shade of the deceased), she has nothing to do. 776

ta-ë' does not represent a divine justice that tots up the sins and good deeds of the soul. She takes into consideration only three categories of crime: incest, infanticide (including voluntary abortion), and murder through witchcraft. She does not bother with such trifles as theft or a hot-blooded killing. Incest (*vo:mači*) is a transgression of the law of exogamy which she established when she taught the first men to which clan each belonged, making them taste the *jacuruxy* broth (see pp. 58 and 130); this was the only time, however, that she intervened in the work of the culture heroes. Incest is the only crime for which *ta-ë'* eventually punishes the sinner, by madness while he is still living. [673]

I have already discussed the fate of an infanticide's soul (p. 69). When the soul of a sorcerer appears before *ta-ë'*, she treats it in the same fashion as she does that of an infanticide; in fact, the three sins mentioned above are considered almost equal. The gravity of a crime depends upon whether the sin was committed thoughtlessly and with some extenuating circumstances, and whether it is repeated. [682]

If there are extenuating circumstances, the sinner is purified by one of the *čorë'ruma*, which licks him from toe to crown. However, even if the *naa'ë* of a perverse and stubborn sinner slips past the *to/ri'ta* gate, it is torn to shreds by the *čorë'ruma* or rejected by *ta-ë'*, who orders lightning to cast it down on the earth again, or even sends it below to the underworld (*na:pi*), where it is transformed into a tiny frog (*nu:gu*), with whose death it vanishes. [783]

It is noteworthy that the Tukuna regard as crimes these three sins which not only harm the individual but are also ruinous for humanity as a whole: "Thou 673

Mond und Sterne und auch die Menschen, letztere aus Erde." It is clear that this description refers to the Christian God, not to a personage of the ancient religion. 773 776

Even today the Tukuna regard the Jewish peddlers, who sometimes appear in their territory, as the direct descendants of the legendary dyure'u, believing them to be tailed, or that at least one of them² is so adorned. 177

The souls.—The naa'e or soul is, according to an expression of the shaman Calixto daueru'k], "what we think" (or thought).³ This type of soul is given the fetus while it is still within the womb; if ta-ë' is careless, the child is born spiritually defective. 774

Dreams are the adventures of the soul, and in them the soul of a wicked sorcerer may commit his crimes in far-off places. The soul, not the body, is responsible for our acts. Its abandonment of the body causes death, after which the soul normally returns to heaven. [78] [76]

The shades of the dead.—Quite different from the role of the naa'e is that of man's second soul, the naëii'. Nevertheless, I have repeatedly gained the impression that the Indians do not always distinguish the two clearly. The naëii' is the shade of the dead. It "is of no importance," the Tukuna told me; it remains on earth near the place where the individual died. At abandoned house sites (taperas) the naëii' congregate, preferably assuming the forms of nocturnal swallows, [825] bacuráos (*Caprimulgus* sp.), but also sometimes those of toads or other creatures. Ribeiro de Sampaio probably referred to this belief when he wrote: "In their philosophy they profess the miserable dogma of metempsychosis, or the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration of souls to another body, even to irrational [sic] ones."⁴ Most of the time, however, a man's naëii' appears in the exact form he had in life, only betraying its nature by certain whimsical habits. The naëii' are moderately dangerous, owing to their mania for sucking blood, flesh, and bones of living people, so as to leave only the empty skin. In the Tukuna idiom this is called "to put the genipapo on someone," because of the black color of the marks left by sucking. A few legends will give a better idea of the naëii's habits. [114]

duë' and the naëii'

An Indian named duë' went out to hunt deep in the jungle; he saw that he was near a house he recognized, in which he thought to spend the night. Duak was falling when he reached it and found it deserted. The ground inside the house was already covered with mould. The inhabitants had gone fishing on Lake Curaná [between the Igarapé de São Jerônimo and the Solimões], where the Omáqua attacked them, killing everyone. duë' climbed up under the roof of the house to spend the night there, but just as it turned completely dark he heard on the path the cries of many swallows, which began to talk among themselves in the human language. They were the shades of the murdered people of the house, which had returned home. "Daughter," he heard a woman say, "go up to the loft and fetch a little maize so that we may prepare mingau!" Soon the girl, in the form of a swallow, came up by the motá [i.e. for notched-log ladder] to the platform where duë' lay prone. He seized her and commenced to tear out her feathers. 775 539

"Come quickly, my daughter!" said the mother. "I cannot," answered the girl swallow. "This man here is plucking out my feathers!" Then duë' threw her down from the platform to the floor, where she died; then he pulled the ladder up beside him. The shades gathered round the dead swallow. "We shall put the genipapo marks on this fellow!" they cried. They searched all around

² The sense of the passage indicates that these Jewish peddlers travel in pairs.—Trane.

³ The word means "judgment"; ku äë a'ë, "thou hast no judgment."

⁴ Ribeiro de Sampaio, § 212.

undergo a ceremony performed by some competent shaman, who seeks mainly to protect them from the soul of the murdered witch.

The avengers 683
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RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY

The upper world.—The upper world, which is much lower than the stars, is divided into two parts. One is inhabited by men, who are like Indians, but live under very different conditions. The other is the residence of the goddess Taé (Our Mother) and of the souls of the deceased (naé) who have been righteous. On their way to the upper world, souls must pass through a sort of gate made of two wooden posts which move back and forth in opposite directions and exclude the souls of incestuous persons, infanticides, murderers, and evil sorcerers. If, however, an evil soul reaches the residence of Taé, she releases two fantastically shaped monsters which demolish it, or else she throws it back to earth, where it becomes a small frog and eventually dies. Taé orders her monsters to purify the souls of occasional sinners by licking them from head to feet. An infanticide's soul has to appear before Taé with the body of the child across his mouth and eat it as a pap.

Taé is not all-powerful, and makes some careless mistakes. She is not the creator and has no connection with the two culture heroes, who equal her in importance, nor with demons, tree spirits, priests, or shamans. But the *Tucuna* greatly respect her because of her close connection with the punishment of sin, both during and after life, and her role as mistress of that part of the soul called naé (thought, sense).

The other part of the human soul (nací) is manifest after death as the "shadow of the deceased." It haunts old house sites and takes a human shape at night but at dawn is transformed into some small animal. It is somewhat feared because of its desire to suck one's blood and eat one's flesh and bones, leaving only the empty skin. Brave and smart people, however, easily fool it.

The lower world.—The oldest beings in the world are the demons of the underworlds (naé); some are grouped in many clans, and others are unaffiliated. Though mortal, many are superior to or are very dangerous to men. Their appearance, represented in certain masks, is usually strange and horrible, though they sometimes assume human shape. Most of them live in different kinds of underground and subaquatic regions (nápi), which are entered through caves. Certain nápi are inhabited by anthropomorphic beings with strange defects, such as blind men, dwarfs, and men without anuses.

The most important subaquatic demons are the dyévae, who have the shape of gigantic silurides or ophidians. One, the master of fishes, shows itself in the eastern rainbow. Another, the master of potter's clay, appears

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